

The eleven components of a successful community, vary widely from Town to Town but are key to discuss when determining the Town's identity or profile, are as follows:

1. Effective Community Leadership

Healthy communities have, and develop, public leaders who work together to enhance the long-term future of the community. Community leadership must be responsive, honest, efficient, enlightened, fair and accountable. It should have the ability to bring the community together to participate in open, neutral dialogue on important issues. Leaders should be representative of their community and be able to envision an economically secure, environmentally sound and socially viable future. Leaders should understand the challenges facing the community and be able to take advantage of opportunities within the community and in cooperation with neighboring ones. Leadership should empower community members to assist in resolving community issues.

2. Informed Citizen Participation

In a healthy community, citizens actively participate through voting in local elections, serving on local boards, attending public hearings, and being involved in civic organizations and community activities. The increasing complexity of municipal operations is limiting the ability of government to meet community needs, escalating the importance of active citizen involvement and volunteerism. All sectors within a community -- private, public, and nonprofit -- must each take responsibility for the community's civic education and exchange information with the public. All citizens need to develop knowledge and skills to contribute to community life. Shared problem solving and planning for the future as a community increases local pride and commitment.

3. Sense of Community

A sense of community is an intangible yet vital component of a healthy community. It encompasses elements such as image, spirit, character and pride, along with processes such as communication, inter-group relations, and networking. A community is made up of different people with different interests, experiences and backgrounds. These characteristics may divide a community into natural groups but there must be cooperation among them if the community is to work well as a unit. Increased communication and understanding of different perspectives among groups and within the community as a whole is an important factor in establishing a sense of community. Villages, towns, and cities with a sense of community include those wherein all members: contribute to and hold a common vision for the future; respect and celebrate their heritage, diversity, and resources; share information, and; develop and sustain an abundance of social networks and relationships.

4. Fostering Healthy Families, Individuals, and Youth

Most communities face a variety of challenging social issues, such as substance abuse, domestic abuse, poverty, and other concerns related to the elderly, youth, and families. Addressing these concerns effectively takes the coordinated efforts of the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. Support services such as adequate child day care, comprehensive after-school, youth, teen, and senior programs, preventative health and substance abuse programs, parenting and family support programs, and effective human service networks help strengthen the social fabric of a community. Aided by effective communication, compassionate leadership, active citizen

participation, and inter-group cooperation, a comprehensive package of supportive services will enable a community to nurture healthy community members.

5. Lifelong Education and Learning

Education is a lifelong endeavor, much more extensive than just the K-12 school system. It starts at home, continues through childhood and the teen years, and progresses throughout adult life. People of all ages need to develop knowledge and skills in order to improve the quality of their own lives and those of their families, and to contribute more effectively to community life. Programs of higher education and lifelong learning provide local businesses with a pool of trained employees. Other formal and informal learning opportunities allow community members to discover hidden talents and develop an array of interests and skills. Lifelong learning allows citizens to manage their lives more effectively in a changing economy and to participate in increasingly complex municipal operations with greater knowledge and skill.

6. Community Services, Facilities, and Utilities

A community provides many essential facilities and services to its members - public facilities such as municipal buildings, schools, parks, pathways and trails, roads, libraries, a recycling center, and cemeteries, and services and utilities such as police, fire, ambulance, highway maintenance, information dissemination, and possibly water, and sewer. These key functions consume the majority of tax dollars and sharply influence the community's quality of life.

7. Recreation and Cultural Heritage

Recreational and cultural activities nurture the body and soul of a community - individual and team sports, outdoor activities, art, crafts, music, dance, theater, holidays, festivals, and celebrations. Recreational opportunities allow community members to experience and appreciate the community's diversity of natural and human resources. Cultural activities reflect and build a community's positive sense of itself and strengthen the fabric of social interactions within the community.

8. Working Landscape and the Natural Environment

Natural resources and historical assets of a community contribute significantly to the quality of life for residents and play an integral part in defining community character. The lakes, streams, rivers, walking trails, working farms, forests, clean air, historic buildings and ruins, special places, wildlife, and open land help determine a community's personality and contribute to the everyday pleasures of community life. A successful community recognizes the importance of these assets and takes appropriate measures to assure their continuance.

9. Economic Vitality

The private, public and non-profit sectors are all important in attracting new investment and in developing new businesses that suit the character of the community and meet its needs. The need to sustain successful workplaces is an important factor to the health of a community. The more often money circulates within the community before leaving, the more the community benefits. A healthy community includes access to a variety of environmentally sound businesses, industries, and institutions that provide reasonable wages and benefits to workers, engage in family-friendly policies, provide workers with opportunities to develop marketable skills, and contribute to the overall wellbeing of the community.

10. Growth and Development

A community can more effectively manage its growth through the prudent use of local zoning districting and ordinances and planning regulations that guide how land is divided, used, and developed. These tools allow the community to regulate the development of residential areas, commercial districts, and the village centers. These are key considerations in managing growth while maintaining community character. Another important factor in the development of a healthy community is the diversity of the housing. This encompasses availability, affordability, and location, all of which affect the lives of community members, especially the elderly, disabled, and low-income families.

11. Transportation

A community's strategic location and economic importance bring many people to live, work, and shop here. Roads get most of us where we need and want to go, and most people drive their own cars for convenience. However, more vehicles sharing the roads results in increased highway maintenance, air pollution, and traffic congestion. Alternatives to automobile travel can include pedestrian and bicycle travel, broadband/internet based ordered and delivered goods and services, and bus and rail transportation.